

[1 March, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

Orissa and also in other States continue owing to varied factors such as differences in resource endowment, historical and geographical factors, development of infrastructure, etc.

(c) Efforts are being made to address the problem relating to regional imbalance through the Backward Regions Grant Fund initiated in the current financial year replacing the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana.

(d) The Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) have launched the evaluation study of the Special Plan for the KBK districts of Orissa in the field in the current year.

Rank in Human Development Index

353. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDAI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India ranks 126th on Human Development Index;
- (b) if so, the salient features of this report so far it relates to India; and
- (c) the action plan of Government to address these issues so far as these relate to the backward regions of the country, i.e. Orissa, Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand etc?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) Yes, Sir. According to the Human Development Report 2006 entitled "Beyond Scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crises", released by the UNDP, India is placed at 126th position on Human Development Index (HDI) amongst 177 countries.

(b) The Report highlights the crucial need to reduce the health costs of the low income groups by addressing the vast deficits in water and sanitation. It explains the "water-sanitation-hygiene benefits loop", wherein provision of clean water and sanitation including personal hygiene form the foundation for any strategy to enhance public health. Regarding water distribution, the Report mentions the need to reduce inequalities between the rural and urban areas, ethnic groups and regions.

Some of the salient features of the Human Development Report 2006 that relate to India are as under:

- i With strong economic progress in high population countries such as China and India, the world is on track for halving the share of people without access to water, but off track on sanitation. India has a low rate of sanitation coverage, particularly in rural areas.
- ii High income households use far more water than poor households. Regulation and sustainable cost recovery are vital to equity and efficiency
- iii. By 2025, India could enter global water stress league. Depletion of groundwater resources is more than one meter a year. Revival of small scale water harvesting programmes in India in response to groundwater crises has shown the potential to generate large returns to investment and reduce risk and vulnerability. Innovative new designs and low cost irrigation technology have to be taken up.
- iv. Health cost of water and sanitation deficits are very high. India lies in the fluoride concentration zone. Diarrhoea claims some 450,000 lives annually in India. Total Sanitation Campaign has been adopted in India for achieving rapid increase in access to sanitation. Sulabh, founded on Gandhian principles, provides access to sanitation to 10 million persons.
- v. Women spend more time collecting water, which reinforces time-poverty, disempowers and lowers their income.
- vi. All of India's 14 major river systems are polluted.
- vii. Pricing water at levels that bear no relation to scarcity, or to ecological protection can create a hidden incentive for wasteful use and pollution. Creating the right incentives can increase water availability.
- viii. Climate change will leave India with fewer rainy days.
- ix. Kyoto Protocol will need to cover not just entire developed world but also major developing countries like India. Deepening environmental footprint of India draws concern. High growth countries such as China and India could raise the developing world's share of carbon emissions from about one half today to about two thirds by 2050, which requires radical shift in policies to facilitate spread of clean technologies, backed by international cooperation.

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(c) The Government is implementing several programmes in the sphere of health, nutrition, access to water, sanitation and development of infrastructure. Under "Bharat Nirman" a time-bound business plan for action in rural infrastructure over the four year period (2005—2009), action is proposed in the areas of irrigation, rural roads, rural water supply, rural housing, rural electrification and rural telecommunication connectivity. The Mid-day Meal Scheme has been launched to increase attendance and improve the children's nutritional status. A National Rural Health Mission has been launched to address the gaps in provision of effective health care to rural population with special focus on 18 States, which have weak public health indicators and/or weak infrastructure. The Backward Regions Grant Fund has been launched for the development of backward areas. This programme has two components, namely, (i) Districts component covering 250 districts, and (ii) Special Plans for Bihar and KBK districts of Orissa.

Report of NSSO

†354. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the report of National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) wherein it was stated that every third person in the country survives on just Rs. Twelve per day or even on lesser than this amount;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the names of the States in the country having forty per cent or more such people under the category-mentioned in the said report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) Based on the percentage of rural and urban population below specified levels of monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) given in the Report No. 508(61/1.0/1), "Level and Pattern of Consumer Expenditure 2004-2005", of NSS 61st Round (July 2004—June 2005) brought out by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.